

C. Mice ©2022

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On Day Six, the elves play card games, and board games, and other games like marbles and jacks. Day Six is a special day for games.



The elves love card games. They play Old Maid, Go Fish, Crazy Eights, Fairy Cards, ElfCards, and JackCards.



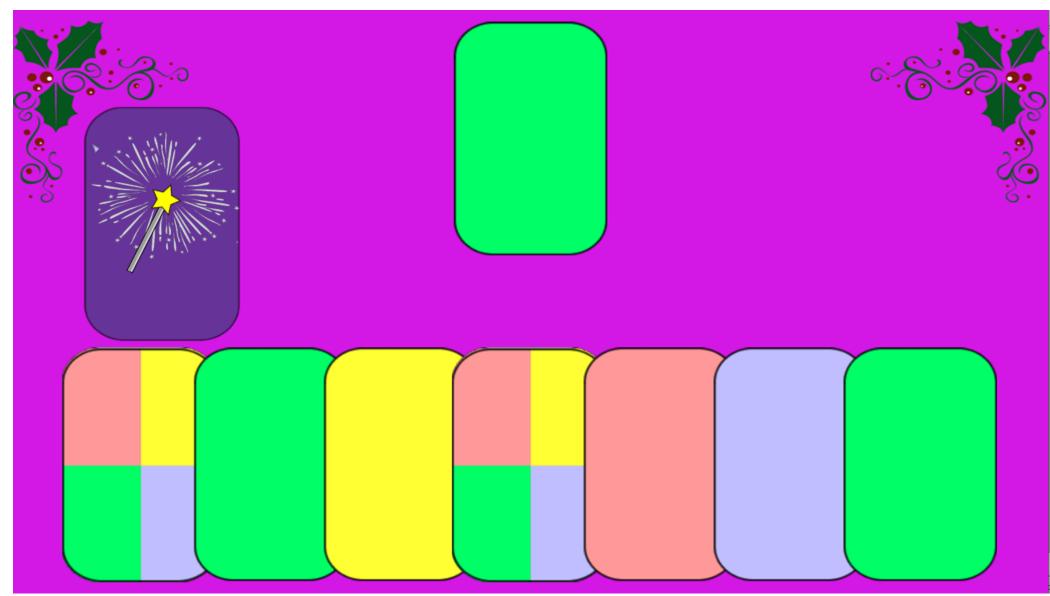
Did you know Old Maid was played back in the 1800's during the time of Queen Victoria. Some people say it came from a French or German card game. Here are some of the card the elves use to play.



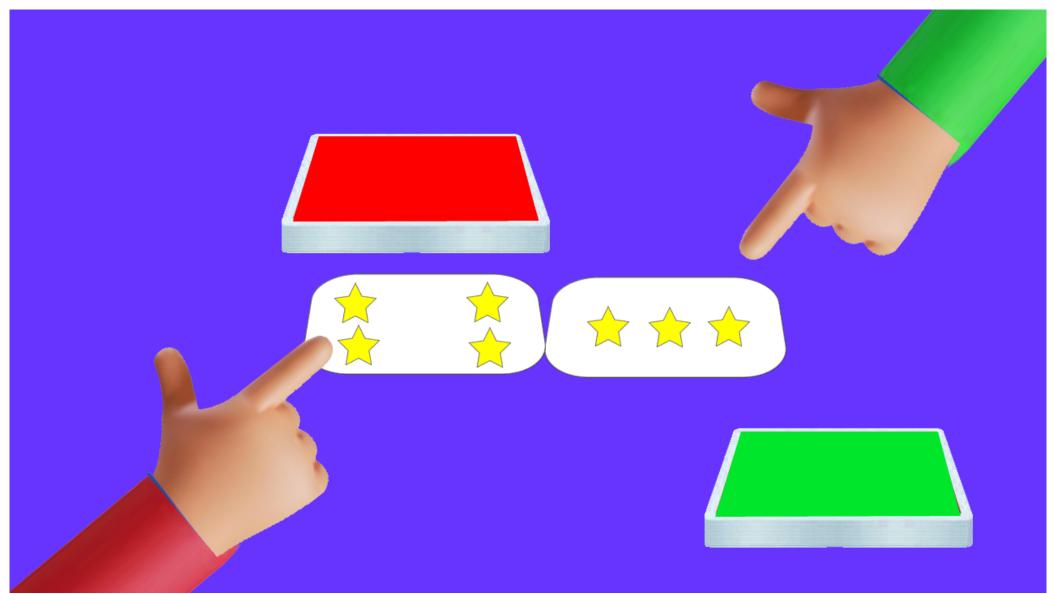
Go Fish was invented in England by John Jaques Jr. way back in 1851. It was first called Happy Families and appeared at the Grand Exhibition in Hyde Park, London.



Crazy Eights began in the 1930's. It is similar to the game Switch played in the United Kingdom and to Mau Mau, popular in Germany. UNO which is similar to Crazy Eights was invented in 1971 by Merle Robbins, a barber, in Reading, Ohio.



Fairy Cards was invented by the Pink Sugar Plum fairy. She made a deck of magic colored cards. The players gets seven cards and must match their cards to the colored card that magically appears. Up to four people can play at once, taking turns. The first one to have matched all their cards is the winner. You can even play it by yourself, kind of like Solitaire. If players do not have a color card that matches the magic card they must draw one from the card deck.



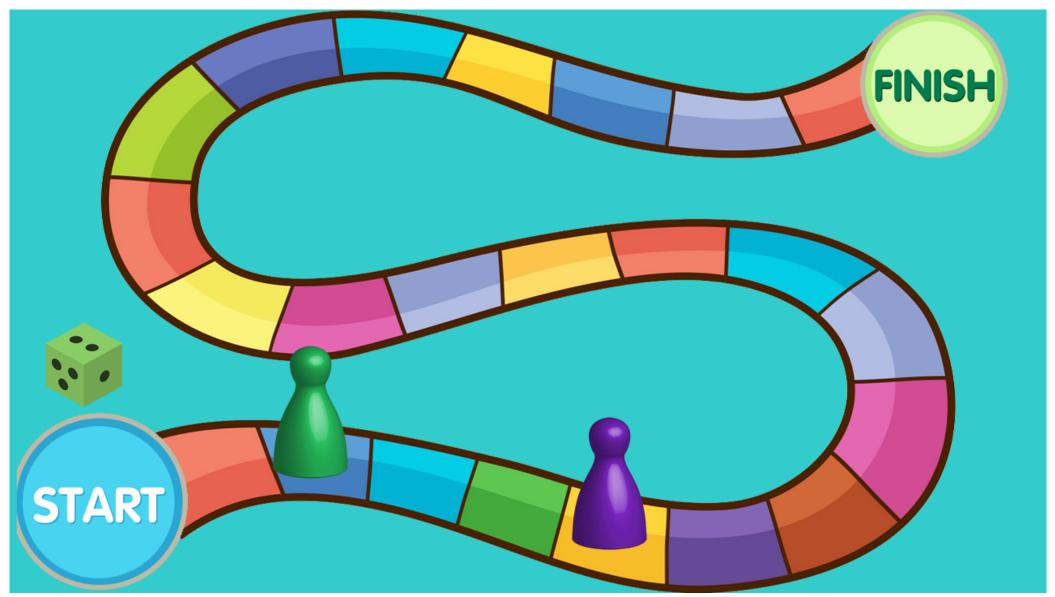
Elf Cards was invented by the elves, of course. There are two decks of cards, one red, one green. One player chooses a card from either deck, then the other player chooses a card from either deck. The player with the higher number card keeps the cards. If it is a tie they each keep their card. When all the cards are gone the player with the most cards is the winner. Elf Cards is similar to the card game War. No one knows when War was invented. It is a very old game.



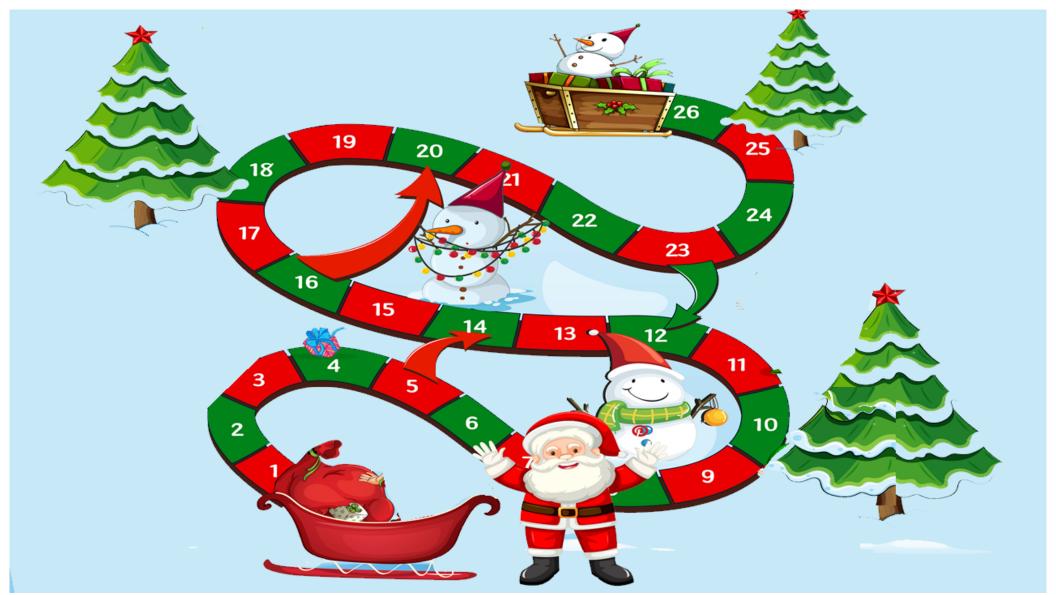
Jack Cards was invented by Jack Frost. It is similar to Blackjack but instead of 21, players take turns picking a number between 1 and 50 as the number to get. That is the "Magic Number". Jack loves to be the dealer and few elves have ever beaten him. He deals out two cards and then he and the other players can draw more cards or stay with the cards they have. Whoever is closest to the "Magic Number" wins and keeps the cards. The player with the most cards when all the cards are gone is the winner. Get a deck of cards and play.



Blackjack originated in France around 1700. Some elves say Jack saw the game at that time but he says he invented it and the French copied him. What do you think?



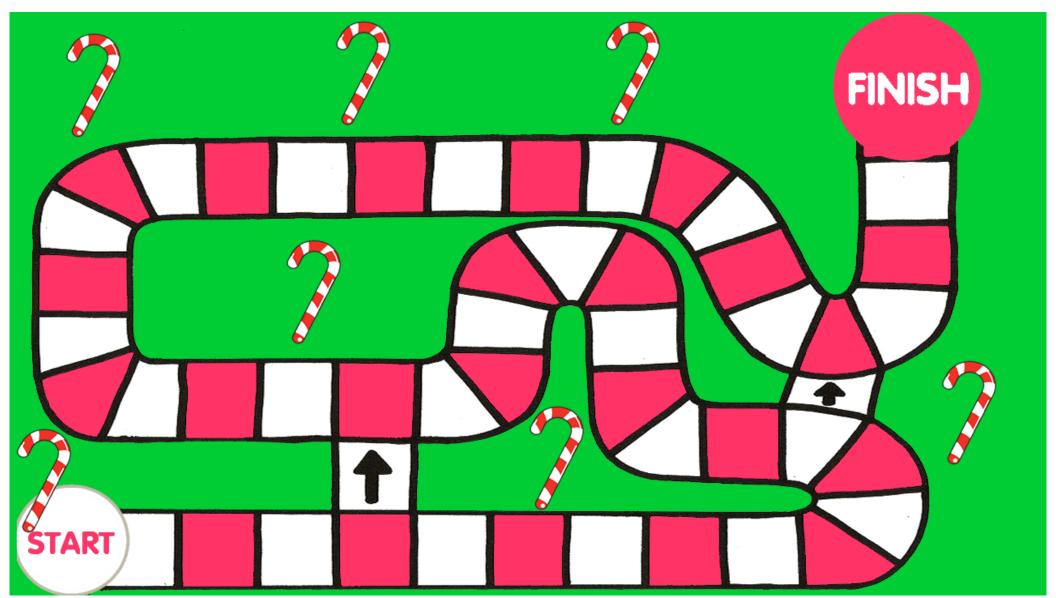
The elves also love board games. They play Santa's Trip, Ludo, and Candy Cane Land.



Santa's Trip is a game like Chutes and Ladders. Did you know Chutes and Ladders, also called Snakes and Ladders, originated in ancient India and was brought to Great Britain in the 1890s?



Ludo is based on Parchisi which is also an Indian game from the 6th century. Ludo first appeared in England in 1896 when the Royal Navy modified Parchisi to make it. In 1930, William Henry Storey filed a patent for Sorry which is also based on Parchisi.



Candy Cane Land is a game similar to Candy Land which was designed in 1948 by Eleanor Abbott while she was recovering from polio in San Diego, California. In 2005, Candy Land was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame at The Strong Museum in Rochester, New York.



The elves also play Jacks, Tiddlywinks, Marbles, Pick up sticks, and Ball-and-cup.



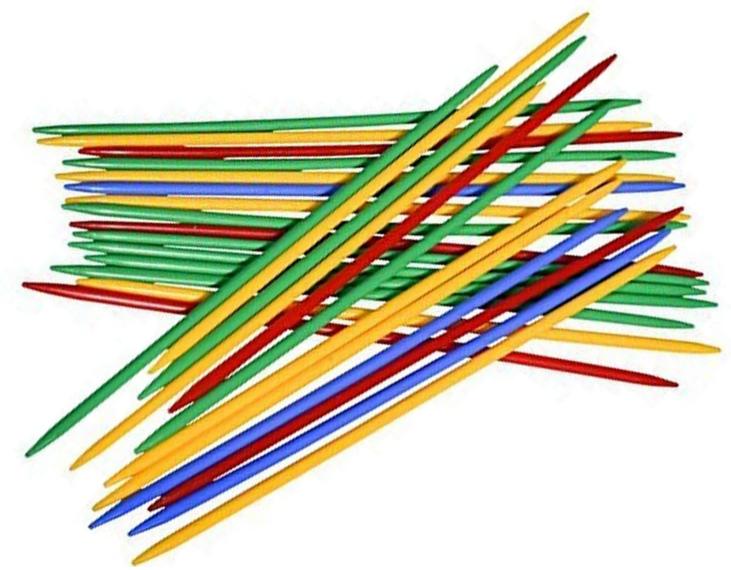
Did you know Jacks is also called Jackstones and Knucklebones? The modern game with a ball and ten jacks was first described in colonial times. It used a wooden ball. Jack Frost says he invented this too. What do you think?



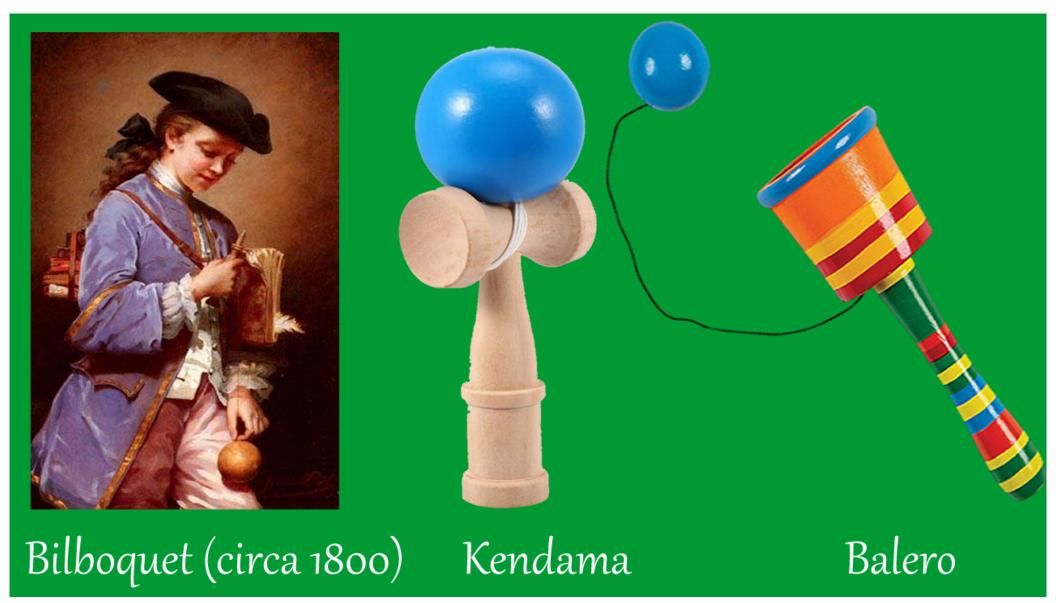
Tiddlywinks began as a parlor game in Victorian England. A bank clerk, Joseph Assheton Fincher, filed the original patent application for the game in 1888.



Marbles has been played for a very long time. Archaeologists found stone marbles dating back to 2500BC in Pakistan. The first glass marbles were probably made in Germany around 1850. I love marbles. They are so pretty.



Pick-up-sticks is also called Jackstraws or Spillikins. It is unclear when and where it started but one possible origin is with the Native Americans who passed the game on to the colonists.



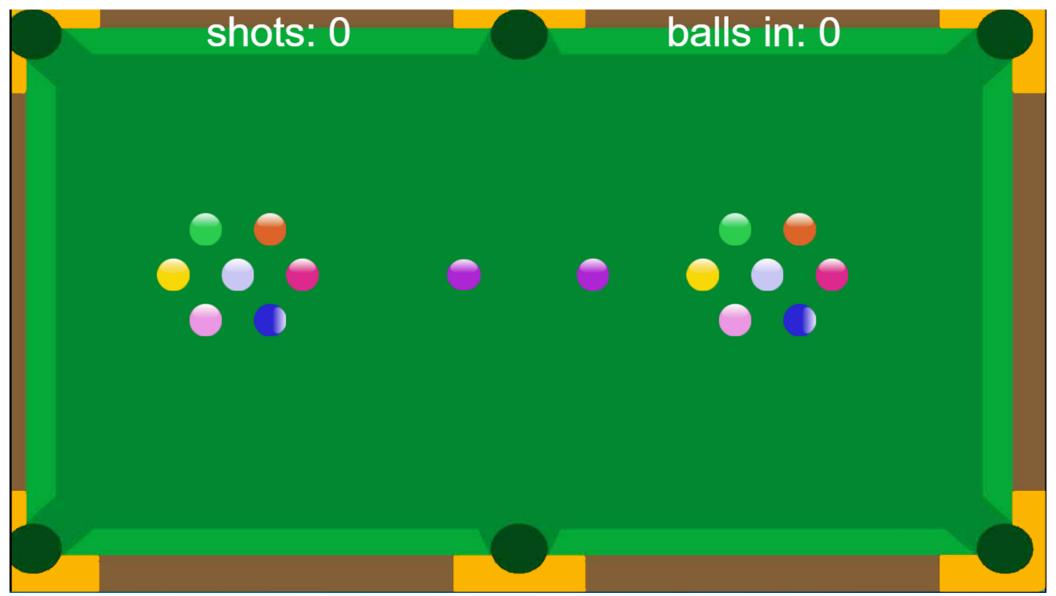
Ball-and-cup is a game of skill. The player must swing the cup so that a ball attached to a string swings up into it. It is called Balero in many Spanish-speaking countries and Bilboquet in France. It was invented in the 14th century. A version with three cups called Kendama is popular in Japan.



The elves also like to play billiards, pinball, and darts. Jack Frost especially likes billiards and he is quite good.



Did you know billiards, or pool, evolved from a lawn game similar to croquet played sometime during the 15th century in Northern Europe. The green cloth on the table simulates grass and the balls were pushed rather than struck with a cue stick.



The elves also invented a billiards game. You can hit any ball into another to knock it in the pocket. They call this game, *ElfPool*. The goal is to shoot all sixteen balls into holes in the fewest number of shots. One elf did it in thirteen shots. Jack says he did it in one shot. No elf believes him.



Pinball began back in the 1800's and evolved into a game called bagatelle. Over time, it became more like the arcade games you see today. In 1932, the first coin operated pinball game was made. Baffle Ball was the first big hit. People loved it. An ancient game called Pachinko is similar to pinball and originated in Japan.



Darts was first played using a slice of tree trunk. The goal was to hit the middle ring on the slice with a dart. The modern dart board with numbers was devised by Brian Gamlin in 1896. He was a carpenter in Lancashire, England.



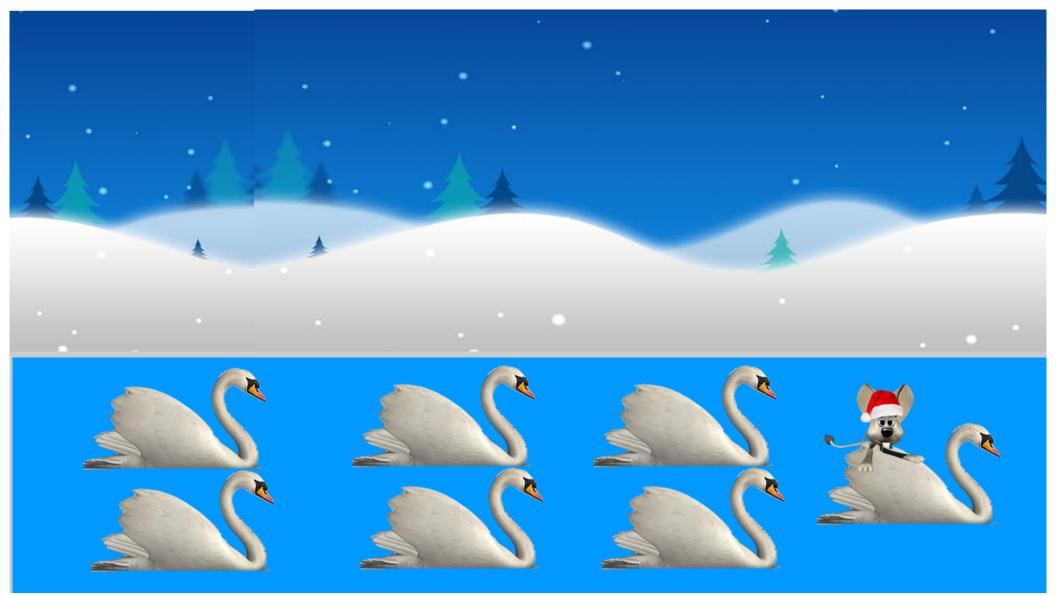
The Sugar Plum fairies saw many of these games as they flew around the world looking for naughty and nice people. They would come and tell Santa about a game and if Santa liked it he would have the elves make it. He puts the card games in children's stockings and the other larger games under the tree. Maybe Santa will bring you one of these games for Christmas... if you are nice and not naughty, of course.



Activities

Click on "Activities" to play many of the games from Day Six.

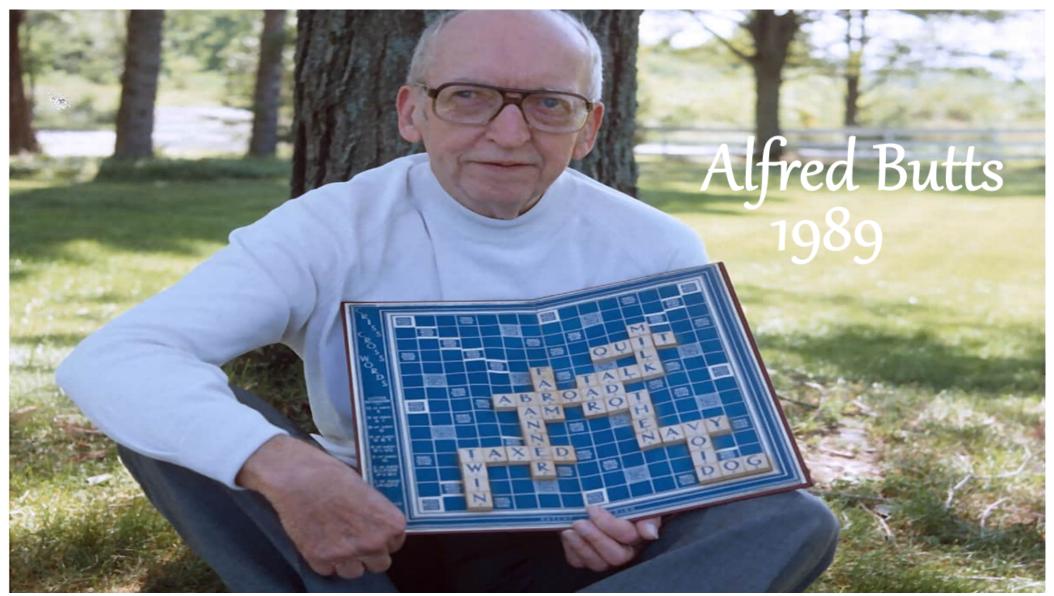




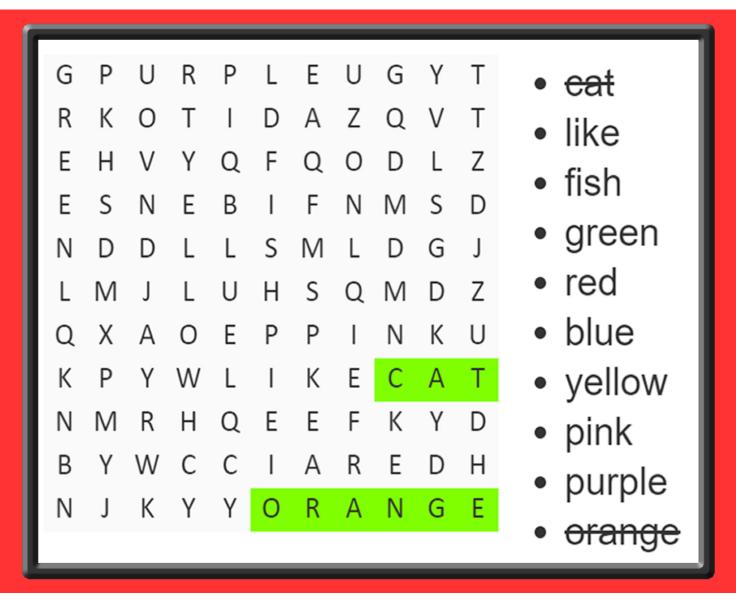
On Day Seven, the elves play word games and work on puzzles at night after work. They love word games and puzzles.



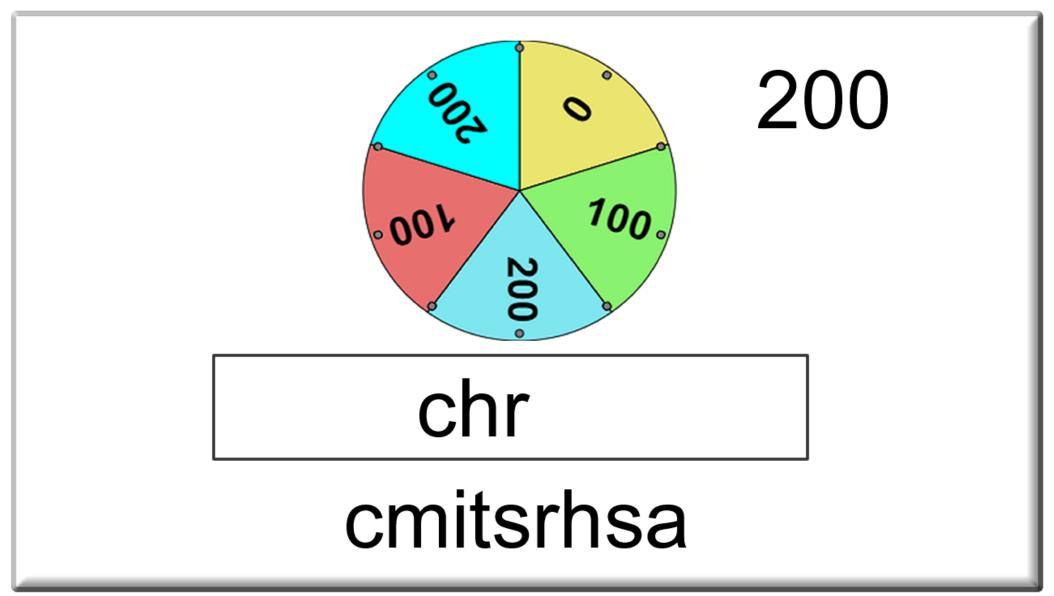
One of the elves' favorite word games is *ElvesWords*. It is a lot like *Scrabble*. Jack Frost is excellent at this game.



Did you know that *Scrabble* was invented in 1938 by American architect Alfred Mosher Butts? There have been two *Scrabble* game shows on TV too. There are *Scrabble* tournaments all around the world. *Scrabble* was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame in 2004.



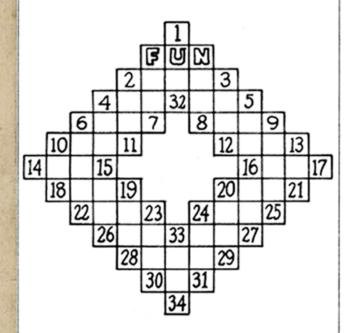
Another word game the elves love is a WordFind. This game was originally designed and published by Norman E. Gibat in the Selenby Digest on March 1, 1968, in Norman, Oklahoma. Sometimes secret messages are hidden in the word search. Do you see one here?



WordJumble is also very popular with the elves. It is like the game Jumble. The elves have magic WordJumble boards that the fairies made. When they pick it, up a jumbled word appears that they must solve. If they solve it, a spinner spins to see how many points they earned. Did you know Jumble was created in 1954 by Martin Naydel? He also drew comic books. Some of his comic books included the Flash and Wonder Woman.

ST NICHOLAS ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS





F^{ILL} in the small squares with words which agree with the following definitions:

2-3. What bargain hunters

4-5. A written acknowledgement.

6-7. Such and nothing more.

10-11. A bird.

14-15. Opposed to less. 18-19. What this puzzle is.

22-23. An animal of prey.

26-27. The close of a day.

28-29. To elude. 30-31. The plural of is.

8-9. To cultivate.

12-13. A bar of wood or iron. 16-17. What artists learn to

do.

20-21. Fastened.

24-25. Found on the seashore.

10-18. The fibre of the

gomuti palm.
6-22. What we all should be.

4-26. A day dream. 2-11. A talon.

19-28. A pigeon.

F-7. Part of your head. 23-30. A river in Russia.

1-32. To govern.

33-34. An aromatic plant. N-8. A fist.

24.31. To agree with.

3-12. Part of a ship.

20-29. One.

5-27. Exchanging.

9-25. Sunk in mud.

13-21. A boy.

Crossword puzzles can be very hard but the elves love them. Crossword-like puzzles, for example Double Diamond Puzzles, appeared in the magazine St. Nicholas. First published published in 1873, the magazine included crossword puzzles until it stopped publication in 1940. Wow, that is a lot of crossword puzzles.

SAN A

ABCDEFGH IJKLMNOPQ RSTUVWXYZ



Snowman is a word game the elves play too. It is like *Hangman* but you don't hang anyone. They didn't like that so they changed the game and the name. Every time a right letter is added a piece of a snowman appears. When he fully appears, he begins to dance. Can you guess the final letter to this word?

THE

TRADITIONAL GAMES

Of England, Scotland, and Ireland

WITH

TUNES, SINGING-RHYMES, AND METHODS OF PLAYING
ACCORDING TO THE VARIANTS EXTANT AND
RECORDED IN DIFFERENT PARTS
OF THE KINGDOM

COLLECTED AND ANNOTATED BY

ALICE BERTHA GOMME

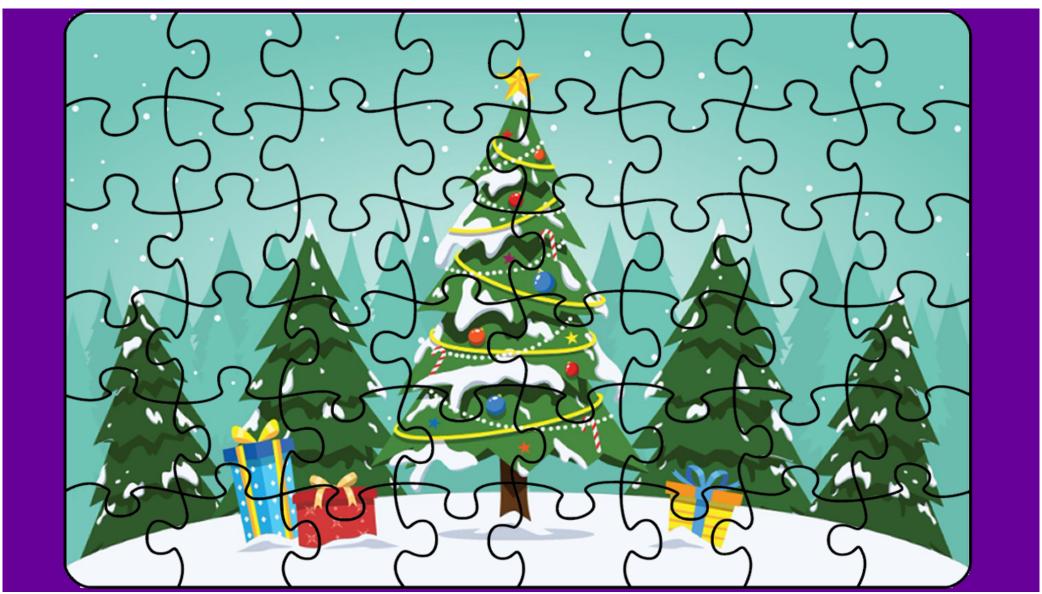
VOL. I.

ACCROSHAY-NUTS IN MAY

LONDON DAVID NUTT, 270-71 STRAND 1894



Did you know the origin of Hangman is unknown? A similar game is mentioned in a book by Alice Gomme in 1894 called *Birds, Beasts, and Fishes*. That book is all about children's games



On Day Seven, the elves also make jigsaw puzzles. Some elves make easy ones with 24 pieces but some elves make giant puzzles with 500 pieces. The big ones take days to finish.



Did you know John Spilsbury, an English map maker made the first jigsaw puzzle around 1760? Originally, maps were used for the puzzle and the pieces were cut along the borders of the countries on the map. They were used to teach geography.



Some puzzles are made out of wood or plastic pieces. These are called *burr puzzles*. They can be balls or cubes but also things like planes and robots. The first known record of a *burr puzzle* appears in a 1698 engraving.



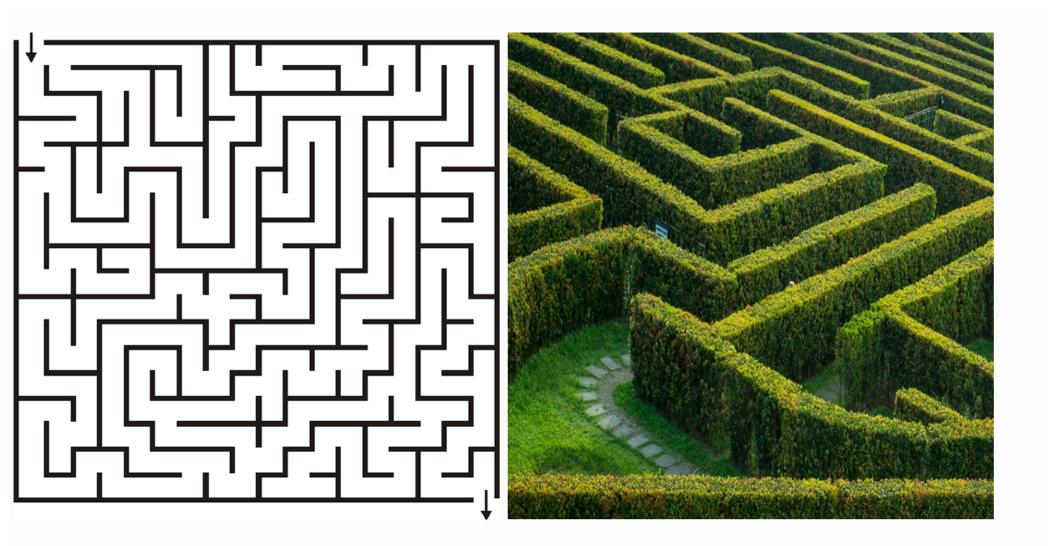
Tangrams are also made of wood or plastic and are kind of like jigsaw puzzles. They can be really hard.



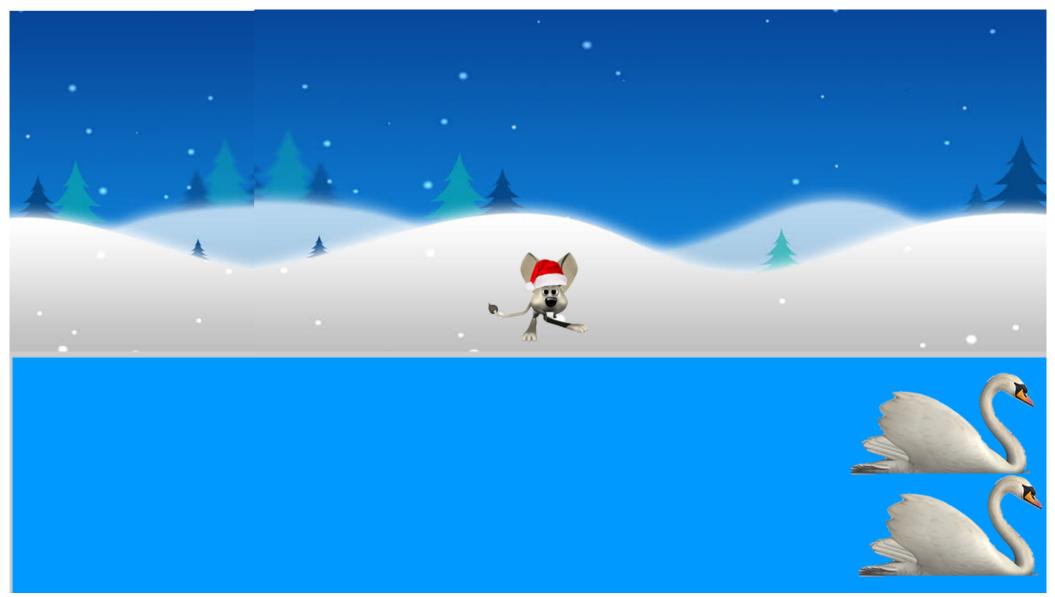




A different kind of puzzle that is very hard is the Rubik's Cube. It was invented by Emo Rubik, an architect and sculptor, in 1974. The world record time for solving a 3×3×3 Rubik's Cube is 3.47 seconds, held by Du Yusheng of China. He did that on November 24, 2018 at the world championships. Jack Frost says he can do it faster but no one has ever seen him even solve the cube. The elves like to play a MiniCube that is only 2x2. Their cube is made of wood, of course.



The elves also love mazes. Did you know the word "maze" dates back the 13th century. But, artifacts with mazes go all the way back to the Bronze Age from 3300 BC to 1200 BC.



That is Day Seven. I hope you like word games and puzzles. Say goodbye to the seven swans a' swimming.



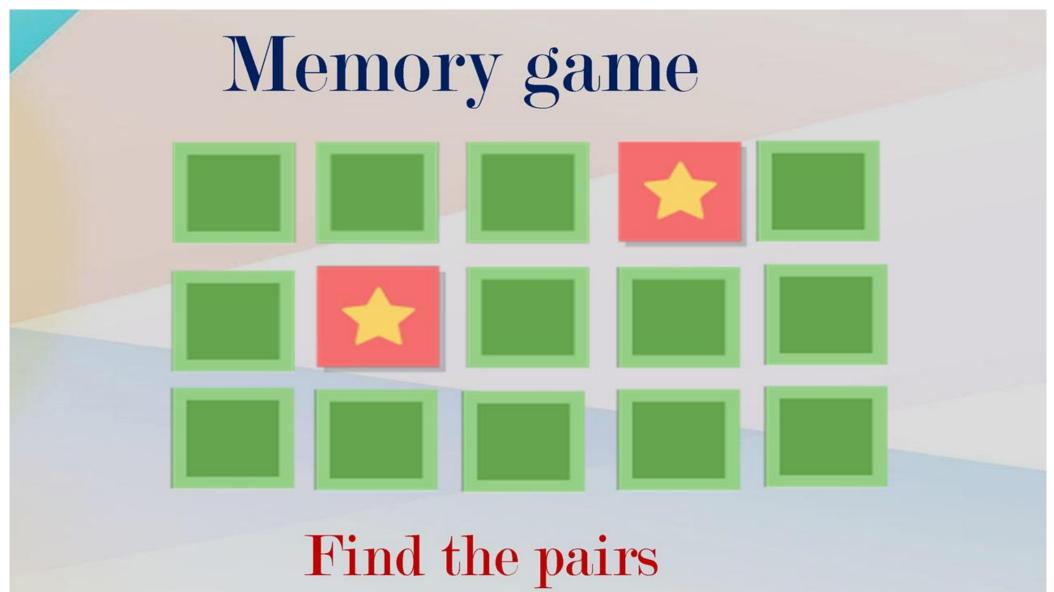
Activities

Click on "Activities" to play many of the games and puzzles the elves do.

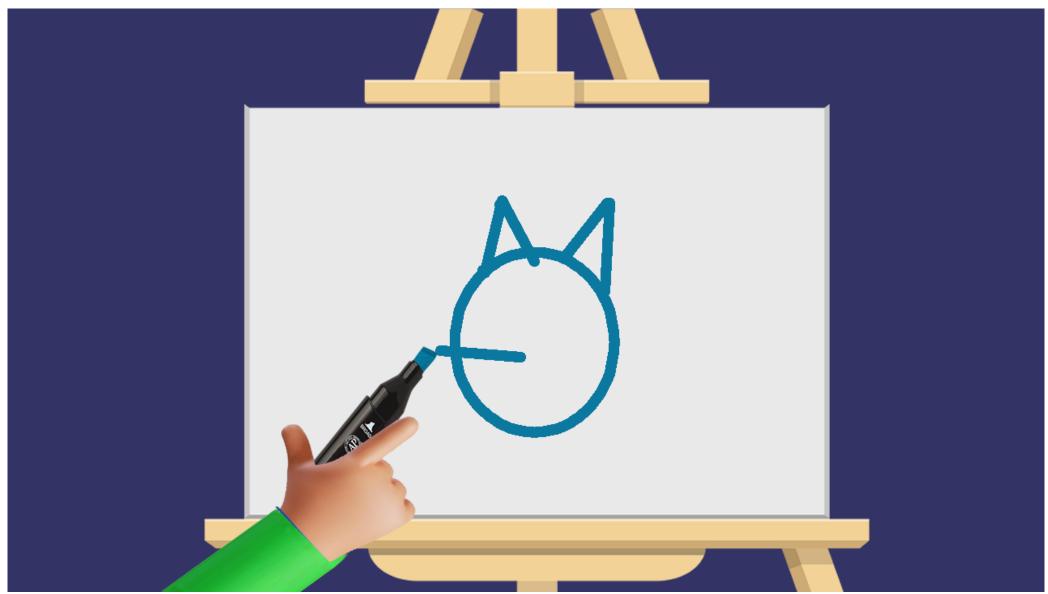




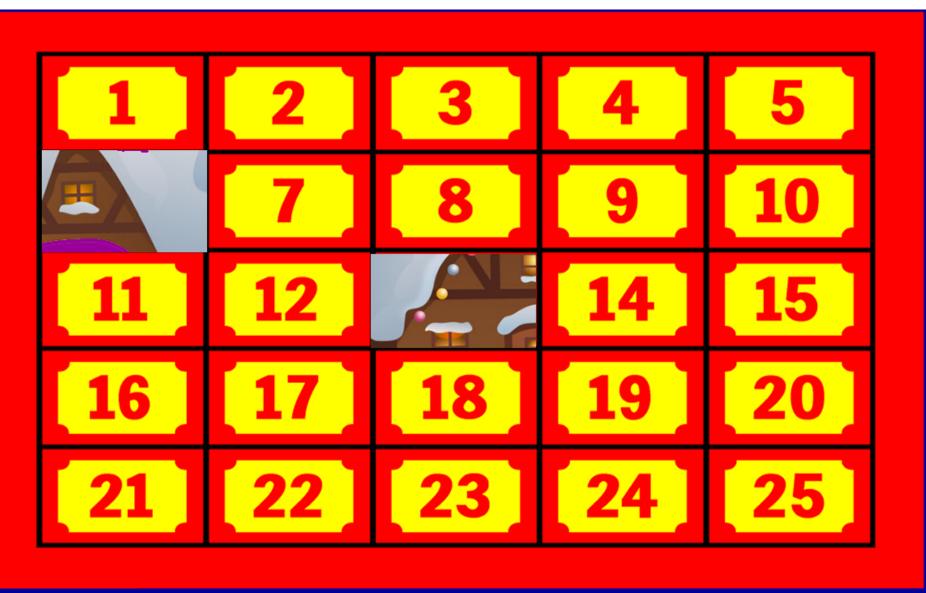
On Day Eight the elves play thinking games. There are so many. I have to really think to remember them all. Here are the ones I can remember.



One such game is *Memory*. There are versions known from Japan in the 16th century, matching pictures painted on shells. It was known as *Awase* or *Kai-awase*. In 1959, the card version of the game also known as *Pairs* or *Pelmanism* was published.



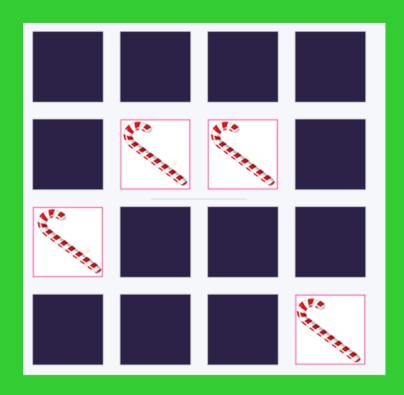
Pictionary is played by all the elves. One elf starts to draw a picture and the others must guess what is being drawn. Pictionary was first created by Robert Angel and his friends in 1981.



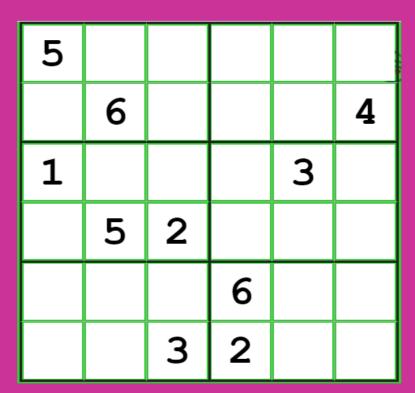
Pictiomory is a mix of the games Pictionary and Memory. You match cards like in Memory to reveal parts of a picture. Then you guess what the picture is, like in Pictionary.



There was also a TV game show called *Concentration* that used a rebus message as the hidden picture. It began way back in the 1950's and was very popular. The elves play *Pictiomory* for hours and watch the old reruns of the TV game show on Elf TV.



A really tricky memory game is *CandyCaneMemory*. In this game several candy canes appear and then disappear and you must remember where they were. Elves usually remember up to five candy canes. Jack says he can remember where eleven were. Do you believe him?

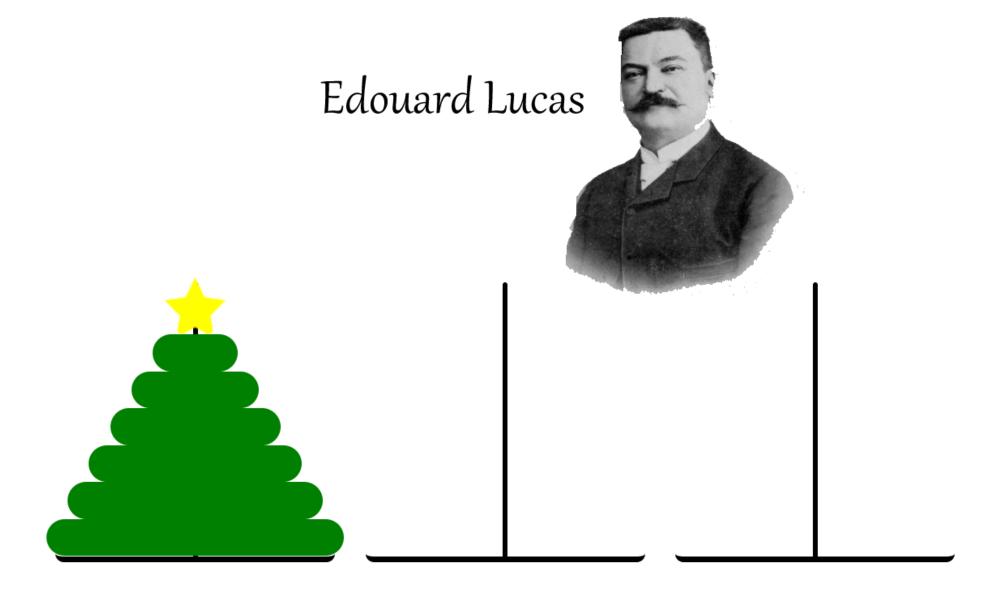






Leonhard Euler

Sudoku-chan, or 'little-sudoku' which has six squares and Sudoku-chanito, or 'teeny-sudoku' which has four squares, are variations of Sudoku that has nine squares. The Sugar Plum Fairies saw Sudoku in their travels and told Santa. He told the elves and they modified the game. Did you know Sudoku began in 1783 when Leonhard Euler, a Swiss mathematician, devised Latin Squares. It changed over time and became the nine-square game in 1979 and was first called Number-Place. When it arrived in Japan in 1984, the Japanese people called it Sudoku.



The elves have a special game called *Christmas Tree* that is like the classic *Tower of Hanoi*. In *Christmas Tree* you must move the parts of the tree from the left spindle to the right spindle without putting a larger part on a smaller part. It is hard. The original game was seen by the fairies way back in 1883 when they came upon French mathematician Édouard Lucas playing it for the first time.





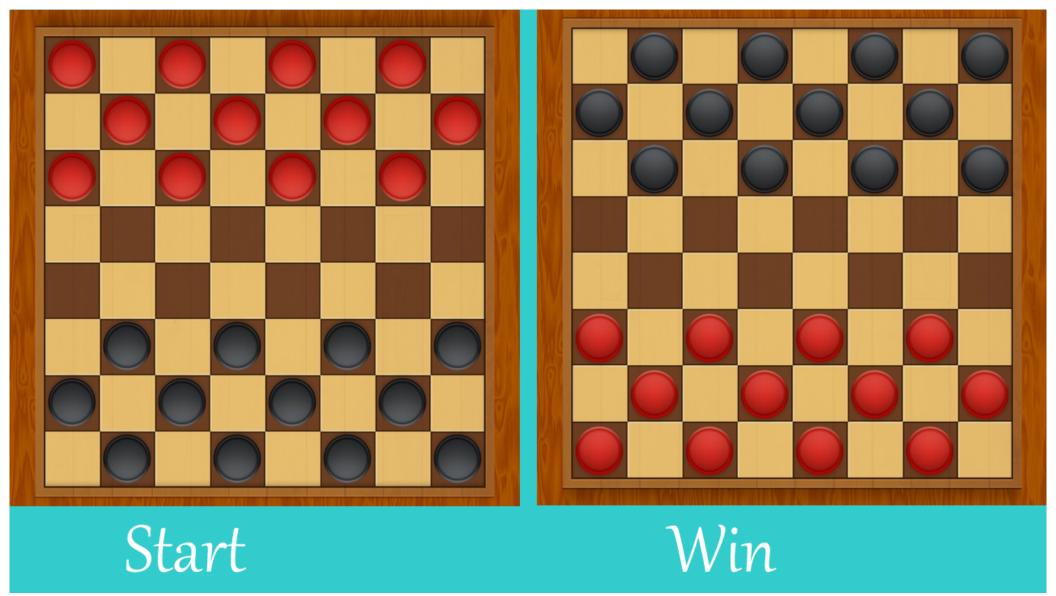
Connect Four is a favorite of Jack Frost. He says he has never been beaten. The game was first sold by Milton Bradley toy company in February, 1974. Almost ten years later in 1983, the Hasbro toy company published Jenga. That game is made of wood. The elves play Jenga with ice blocks because they slide easier.



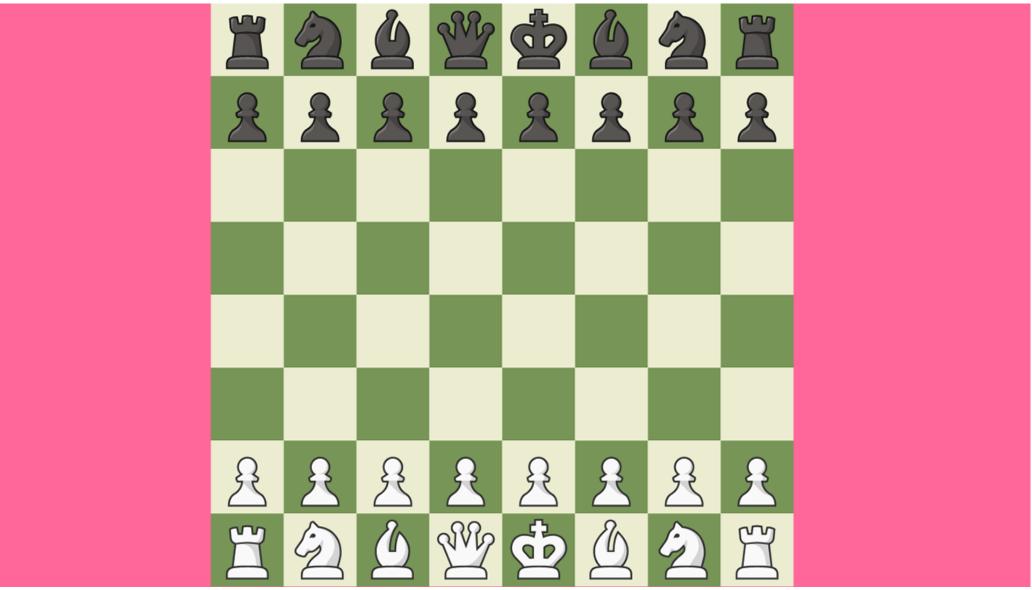
A very old game that the elves play is *Dominoes*. The game originated in China in the 12th century. In Europe, some dominoes are made of bone. Most dominoes today are made of plastic.



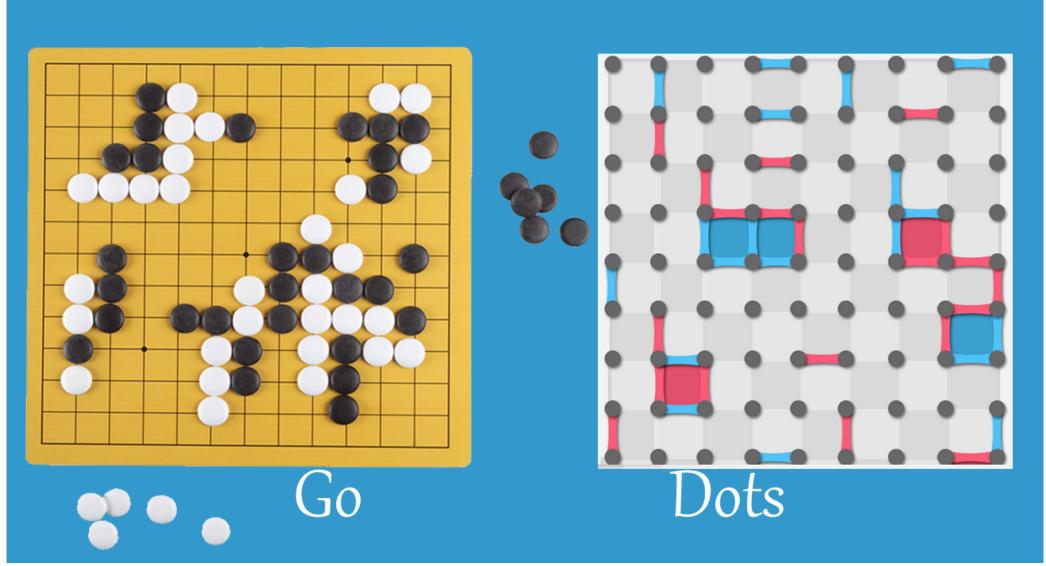
There are many games the elves play on a checkerboard. They even invented some. There is, of course, Checkers or Draughts. A board resembling a checkers board was found in Ur dating from 3000 BC. A variation of checkers is Kings; all the checkers are kings. The elves invented that one. The elves also invented Just One in which all checkers are kings and one player must jump other kings until just one is left.



Another elf-invented game played on a checkerboard is *Switch*. One player must move the red checkers from the top to the bottom and the black checkers from the bottom to the top. There is no jumping and checkers can move like kings do.



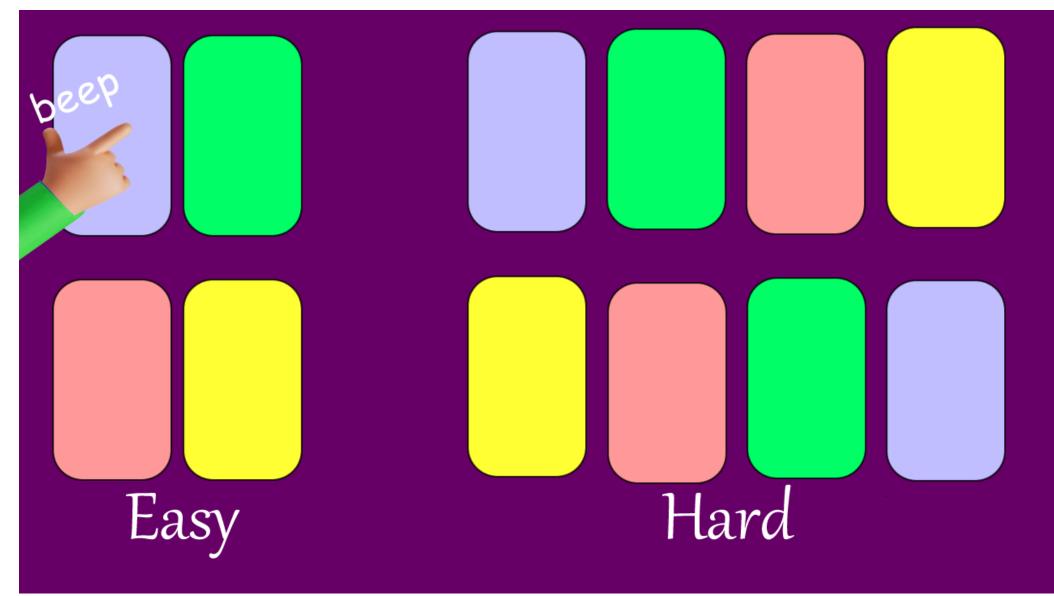
A very different game played on a checkerboard is *Chess*. Did you know that *Chess* was played way back in the 7th century in Persia. It can be difficult and require lots of thinking. There is a world championship that began in 1886. It takes years of playing and practice to become a chess master.



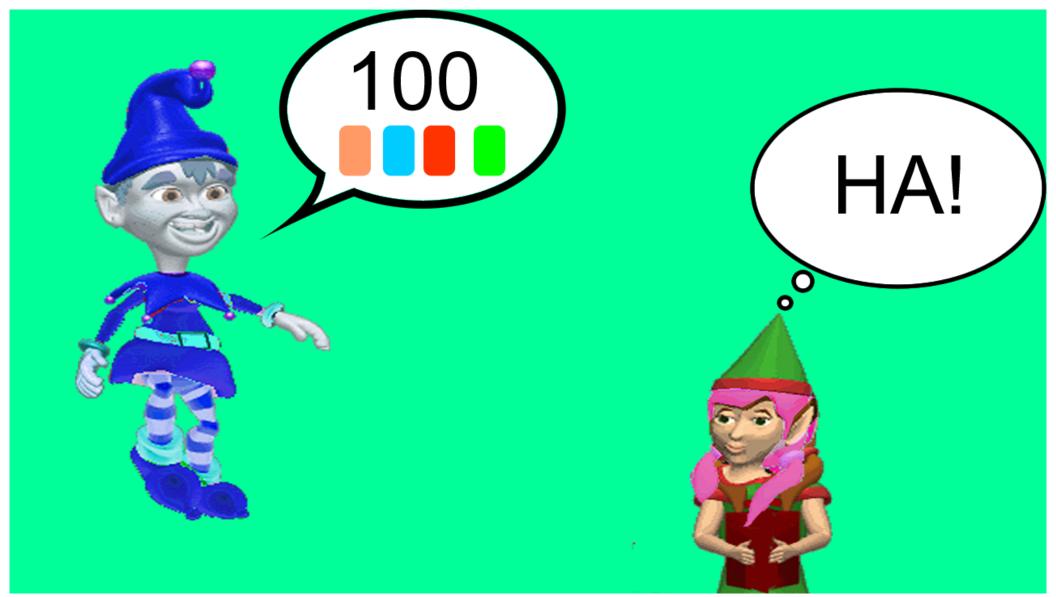
The fairies also saw people playing a game called Go over 2500 years ago in China. The game of Dots is similar to Go. It was first published in the 19th century by French mathematician Édouard Lucas, who called it *la pipopipette*. Wow, he invented *Towers of Hanoi* too.



The fairies love *Chinese Checkers* and the elves call it *Fairy Checkers*. All five fairies play and one elf tries to beat them. No elf ever has. The game was invented in Germany in 1892, not China, and is a variation of the older American game *Halma*. The name "Chinese checkers" was used in a marketing campaign by Bill and Jack Pressman in 1928 to sell more games by giving the game an exotic allure.



The elves also love *CopyCat*. They use up to eight fairy cards and lay them on the table. One elf touches three cards and says 'beep' or 'boop' on each touch. Elves love to say 'beep' and 'boop'. I don't understand why, do you? Then, another elf must touch the same cards in order and say the right beep or boop for each. If the second elf is right he or she touches four cards and beeps or boops for each.



The elves take turns, increasing the number of cards touched and beeps and boops until both make a mistake. The elf who remembers the highest number wins. It is hard to remember the order of the colors and the beeps and boops. Jack Frost says he can remember one hundred cards and beeps and boops in order...unless it is cold outside. No elf believes him; it is always cold at the North Pole. Get some cards and play!



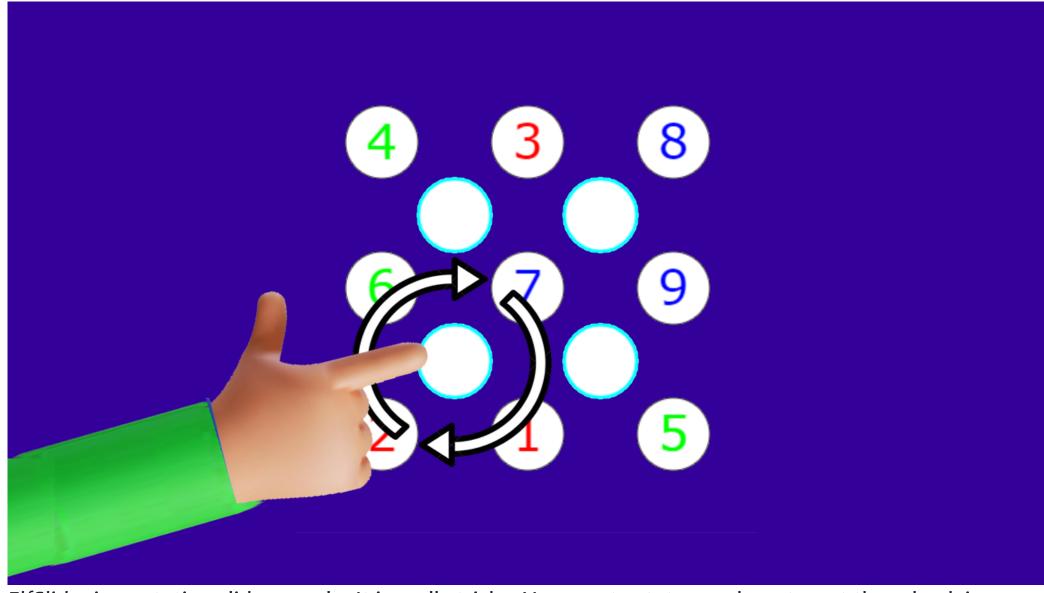


An electronic game similar to *CopyCat* that people play, Simon, was invented by Ralph H. Baer and Howard J. Morrison, and has been available since 1978. Baer is considered the *Father of Video Games*. In February 2006, he was awarded the National Medal of Technology.

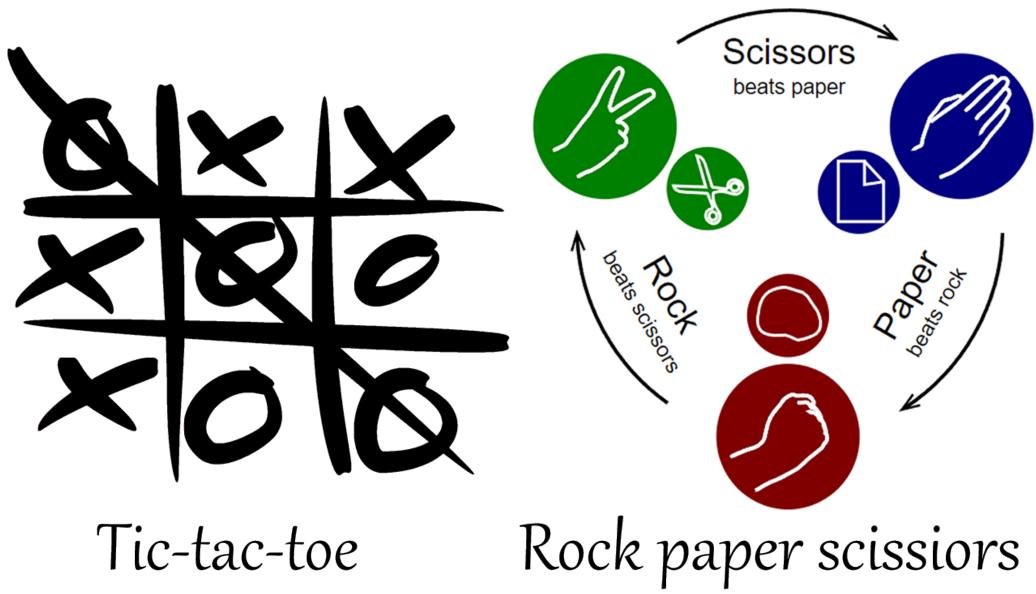




Slider Puzzles are very tricky. Any elf can solve an eight number puzzle and most elves can solve a fifteen number puzzle. Only a few can solve a 25 level or more puzzle. The Slider Puzzle was invented by Noyes Chapman in 1880. A variation called Klotski or Pennant was developed in 1909 in Chicago.



ElfSlider is a rotating slider puzzle. It is really tricky. You must rotate numbers to put them back in order. I'm not sure this is even possible.



Tic-tac-toe is an ancient games the elves play. The game first appeared around 1300 BC in ancient Egypt. Tic-tac-toe-like game boards have been found on roofing tiles dating from that period. Rock paper scissors dates back to 200 BC in China. It was first mentioned in the book Wuzazu.



Well, that is Day Eight. The elves play games and work puzzles on any night not just on Days Six Seven and Eight. You can too.



Activities

Click on "Activities" to play some thinking games. Maybe there are some I forgot t mention.





Day Nine is hot cocoa day. I love hot cocoa with a candy cane to stir it. Mrs. Claus makes it. Hers is the best. I will tell you the recipe in a bit. Also, there are two fun contests, snowball stacking and marshmallow stacking.



On their lunch break, the elves have a snowball stacking contest. The elf who stacks the highest stack of snowballs is given a snow crown and the honor of being "Master Snowball Stacker". One year an elf stacked twenty five snowballs. That is still the record. Sometimes Jack Frost ruins a stack and laughs.



Did you know people have stacking contests? One contest is to stack cups. It originated in the early 1980's in southern California. In 1981, Wayne Godinet came up with the idea and cup or sport stacking was born.



As I said earlier, it is a hot cocoa night and that also means it is time for marshmallow stacking. After dinner in each elf household, the elves make hot cocoa. They all use Mrs. Claus' recipe. She uses milk, cocoa powder, and honey. Sometimes she uses water instead of milk. Some elves almond milk. First, she heats the milk or water.



In a cup, she puts honey. You can put as much as you want. Then, she mixes in a teaspoon full of cocoa powder. She pours the hot liquid in the cup and stirs. Delicious! Each elf adds more or less honey and cocoa.



Some elves add peppermint and some add cinnamon. All elves add mini-marshmallows. They love marshmallows in their hot cocoa. They must stack the marshmallows before they put them in. If they only want a few then the stacking is easy. But, if they want lots it may take a long time to stack them. To make a tall stack some elves make marshmallow pyramids. Sometimes, the hot cocoa becomes cold cocoa if the elf wanted too many marshmallows.



The elves also play Simon Says on this night. They learned this game when they were in the Enchanted Forest. It is a very simple game. It was invented by, who else, Simple Simon, of course. Simon and the elves would get together and the elves would do what Simon said. Simple! Simon would always say, "Simon says..." first. If Simon just said to do something like rub their stomach without saying "Simon says..." the elf that did it was out. Or... if they don't do what Simon says they are out.



People around the world play variations of "Simon says...". In China, the phrase is "The teacher says...". In Canada, the phrase is "Jean dit..." ("John says"). In Spanish speaking countries the phrase is "Mando, mando..." ("I command..."). In Norway, the phrase is "Kongen befaler..." ("The king commands..."). How do you think so many people learned this game?



After sipping hot cocoa and playing Simon Says, it is time for juggling. Elves are master jugglers. Once, an elf juggled seven snowballs. That is the record. Everyone enjoys the juggling. The juggling contest is held at the giant snow globe and broadcast on Elf TV. Most elves watch it on TV. Tickets are hard to come by for the live contest at the snow globe.



That is Day Nine. Maybe you can stack some snowballs and marshmallows and then sip some hot cocoa. Use Mrs. Claus' recipe, of course. See if you can juggle some balls or snowballs too.



Activities

Click on "Activities" to stack some marshmallows and snowballs. You can learn to juggle, too.





On Day Ten everyone wears their Christmas sweaters and reads and tells stories.



As I told you earlier, some people call them ugly Christmas sweaters but no one at the North Pole does. Every elf at the North Pole has one and every elf loves them.



Even Santa and Mrs. Claus love them. Did you know that people began wearing ugly Christmas sweaters in the 1980's when characters on TV shows wore them. At the North Pole, they have been worn for thousands of years. It started so long ago I can't even remember what century it was.



It is also story night. At night, the elves tell Christmas Month stories and read Christmas books. The fairies bring back copies of Christmas books when they travel and these go in the Elf Library. They use their magic to make a copy of a book, kind of like computers do today.



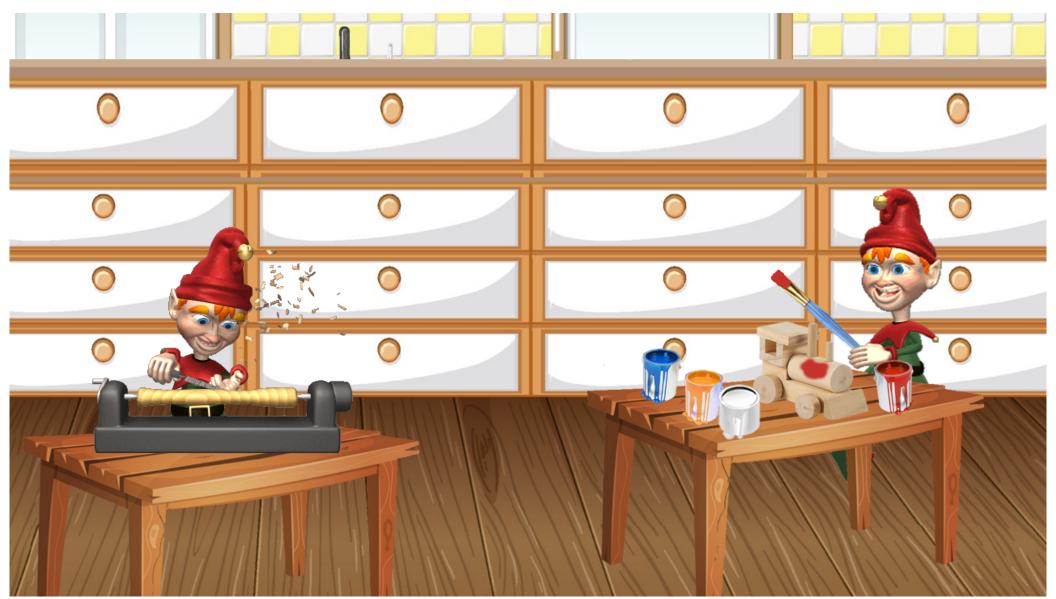
An elf that tends to the reindeer always tells them the story of Rudolph. It helps the the reindeer to remember to be kind to everyone, especially those who are different.



Mother and father elves read stories to their elflings. The elfings love "How the Grinch stole Christmas". The Grinch was a Christmas Goblin once but he changed just like in the story. Now he is kind and generous to all.



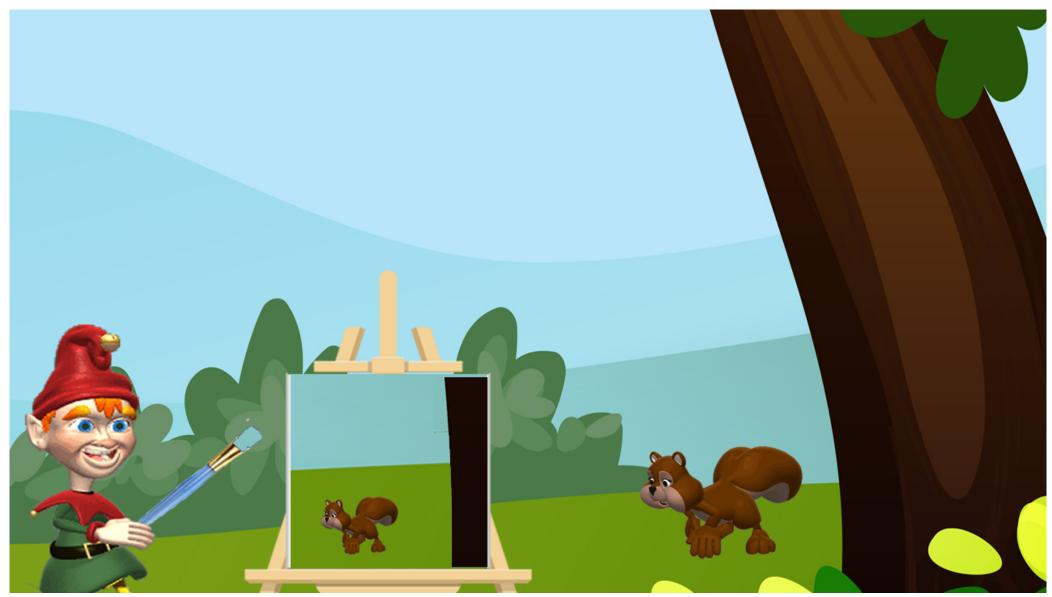
They also tell stories only the elves know. Let's listen to one. This is the story of Jack Frost.



Once, in the Enchanted Forest, there was an elf named Jack. He was an assistant toymaker elf. He painted the toys and loved to paint nature scenes after work.



He was also quite a prankster.



He loved animals and would go to the forest to paint pictures of them.



Everyday, he painted the toys that the toymakers made. He had four colors of paint, red, blue, yellow and white. He was only supposed to use those colors. But... he was a very creative elf and a bit mischievous too. He decided to mix some colors together. First, he mixed blue and yellow and he got green. Then he mixed red and white and got pink.



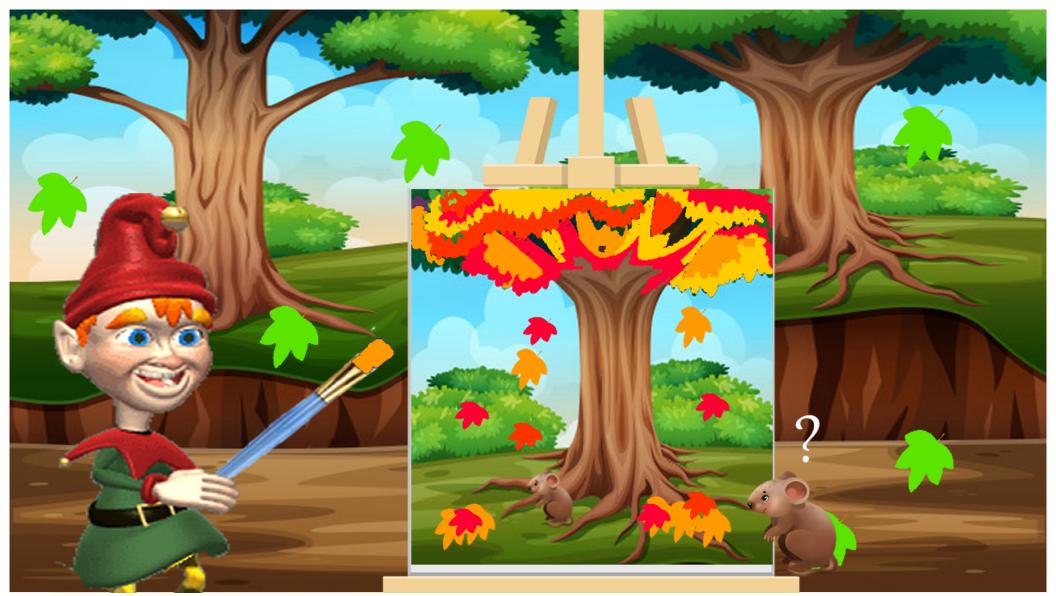
He mixed more colors and soon he had all the colors in the rainbow plus a few more.



He thought it would be nice to have different color toys so he painted a toy airplane purple. The head toymaker elf was not happy. She told Jack to paint the airplane blue and stop being so foolish. Now Jack was not happy.



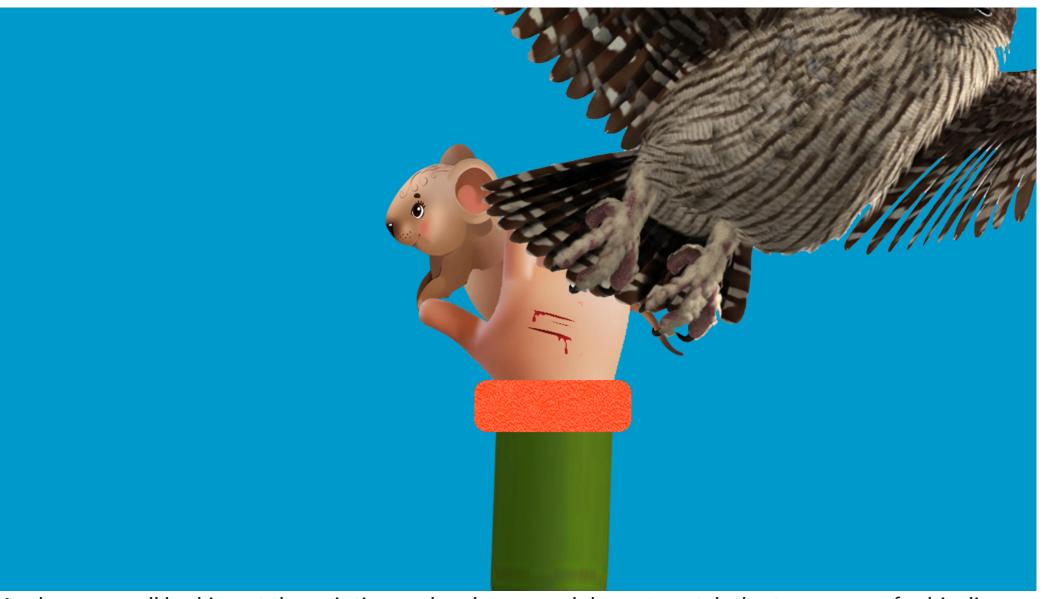
Later that day, Jack went into the forest to paint a picture of a tree mouse. It was late autumn and the leaves on the trees were falling. Green leaves flew through the air and into piles on the ground. He thought, "How boring. All the leaves are green."



So... in his picture he painted the leaves yellow and orange and red. The tree mouse thought it was odd. She had never seen colored leaves before. Flowers were different colors but all the tree leaves were green.



Just then, Old Man Winter came by. He stopped and looked at Jack's painting.



As they were all looking at the painting and owl swooped down to catch the tree mouse for his dinner. Jack snatched up the tree mouse just before the owl could grab her. The owl's talons cut Jack's hand.



The tree mouse thanked Jack, gave him a kiss, and ran back to her home in the tree before the owl could come back.



Old Man Winter told Jack, "You are a very brave and kind elf; and a fine painter. The leaves in your painting are beautiful. I can give you the magic to change the color of the leaves in the fall and to bring the shimmering frost to make the forest shiny and glisten. Would you like that?" Jack shouted, "YES!"



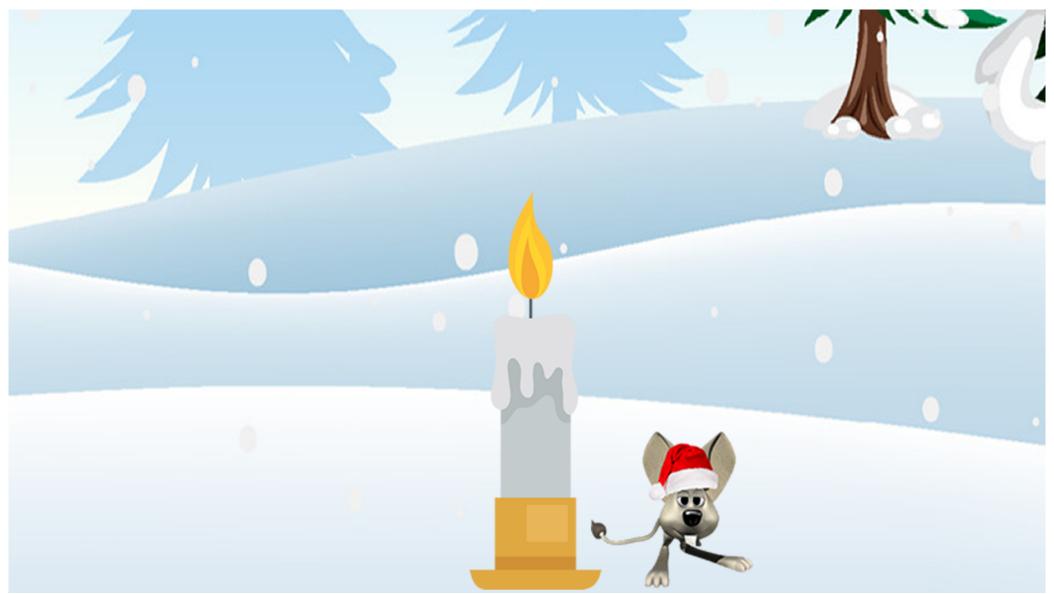
He waved his wand and Jack rose into the air. His paint brush began to glow. It was now magic. He began to glow. He was now magic too. "You will now be known as Jack Frost." said the old wizard. Jack also turned a beautiful frosty blue.



From that day on, Jack Frost has painted the leaves beautiful colors in the fall and brought the glistening frost in the winter. It is the first signal that Christmas month is near.



He still plays tricks on every elf, of course. But he never plays tricks on animals. Animals are his friends and he always helps them when he can.



Well, that is the story of Jack Frost and how he signals Christmas Month is approaching. I hope you liked it. Maybe someday you will see Jack working his magic. If not, you can always look at the colorful fall leaves and glistening frost on your window and thank Jack for his beautiful artwork. And remember to wear your beautiful Christmas sweater and read Christmas story books.



Activities

Click on "Activities" to hear the story of the Grinch, design a Christmas sweater, and paint like Jack Frost.